

The Antigone (Sophocles)



STATUE OF SOPHOCLES IN THE LATERAN MUSEUM.

By the Students of Toronto University.

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General and the Countess of Aberdeen, who will be present,
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THE PRODUCTION OF

SOPHOCLES'

“ANTIGONE,”

WITH

MENDELSSOHN'S MUSIC,

BY THE STUDENTS OF

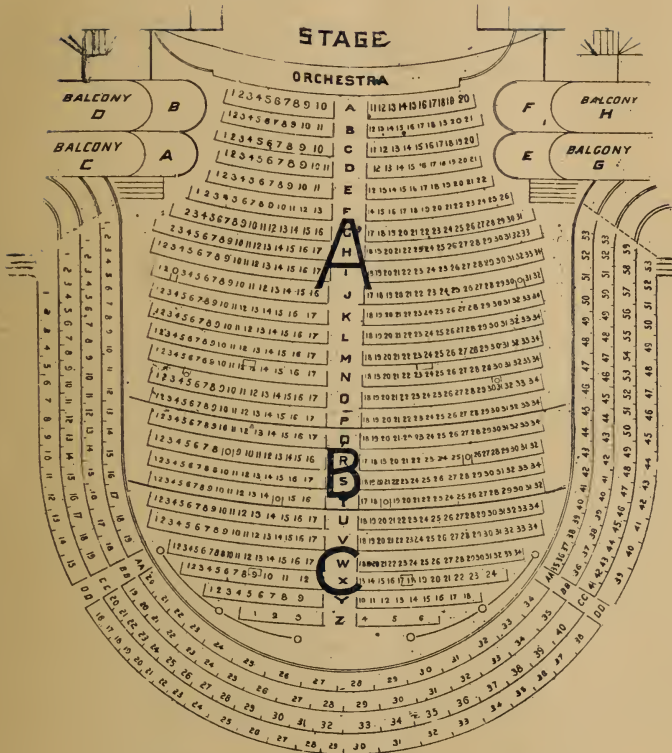
TORONTO UNIVERSITY.



ACADEMY OF MUSIC,

THURSDAY, FRIDAY and SATURDAY, FEB. 15th, 16th and 17th, 1894.

SCALE OF PRICES :



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CONDUCTOR	MR. F. H. TORRINGTON.
CHORUS MASTER	MR. W. H. ROBINSON.
STAGE MANAGER	MR. H. N. SHAW.
BUSINESS MANAGER	MR. I. E. SUCKLING.

Cast:

KING CREON	MR. K. D. MACMILLAN, '94.
HAEMON	MR. W. P. REEVE, '95.
PROPHET	MR. P. J. ROBINSON, '96.
GUARD	MR. H. J. SISSONS, '94.
FIRST MESSENGER	MR. C. P. MEGAN, '95.
SECOND MESSENGER	MR. COATES, '96.
CORYPHEUS	MR. F. E. BIGELOW, '94.
ANTIGONE	MISS HUNTER, '95.
ISMENE	MISS DURAND, '95.
QUEEN EURYDICE	MISS STEEN, '95.
MAIDS OF HONOR	{ MISS NEELANDS, '96.
	{ MISS BURNHAM, '96.
KING'S GUARDS	{ MR. G. H. LEVY, '94.
	{ MR. W. M. BOULTBEE, '94.
	{ MR. D. JAMES, '94.
	{ MR. J. DODDS, '96.
PROPHET'S BOY	MR. D. R. GRANT, '97.

ARGUMENT.

LAIUS, King of Thebes, had been warned against marriage, but rashly and recklessly he disregarded the warning. The son born to him, Oedipus, was taken away to a foreign land and adopted by its king and queen for their own son. Being warned that he was fated to kill his father and marry his mother, he endeavored to avert this doom, but from a like rashness, in his haste to prove the warning false, he left his supposed parents, came unwittingly to his former home, killed Laius in a random quarrel, and married Jocasta, his mother, before enquiring whether his reputed parents were his real parents or not. The same fault of blind recklessness destroys his sons, Eteocles and Polynices, who quarrel about the succession to the throne, and fall by each other's hands in battle. From the same fault Antigone hastened to bury Polynices' body, without seeking to win thereto the consent of the king, her uncle Creon, who had forbidden

the burial, because Polynices had fallen while leading an invading host against his country. From the same fault Creon, blind to everything except the obligation to punish disloyalty, persists in refusing burial to Polynices, and in condemning Antigone, when she attempts to bury her brother, to death by starvation. Antigone in her haste at once commits suicide. Creon, after his first passion has spent itself, is frightened by the blind prophet Teiresias into relenting. But his relenting is too late to save her, and meanwhile her death destroys Creon's son, her lover and cousin Haemon, who kills himself over her body. His death in turn is a fatal blow to his mother, the Queen Eurydice, who has lately lost in war her only other son, Megareus, and a third suicide follows. Creon is left childless and wifeless; he has learnt the lesson that prudence is the larger part of happiness, but he has learnt too late, and the curse of rashness has destroyed the whole royal house in both its lines.



The Chorus (elders of Thebes). (Mr. Langton as one of the Theban elders. From the former representation.)

Let us now follow for a few minutes the unfolding of the tragedy. The scene opens at early morning after the fatal battle in which the two brothers have fallen. Antigone emerges cautiously from the palace leading the reluctant Ismene. She asks her sister's help to bury Polynices. Ismene, who is gentler and more lovable—not a mere colorless and selfish coward as Antigone in her resentment thinks her—but shrinking and womanly, tries to dissuade her sister. Antigone answers her with scorn, departs and buries the

body. The watchmen set by Creon to watch the corpse do not detect the deed till it is finished and the doer out of sight; then they cast lots and depute one of their number to inform Creon. The man who has this unwelcome task to perform adds the comic touch required to relieve the tragedy. He is to the Antigone what Juliet's nurse is to Romeo and Juliet. The soliloquies which he describes between his heart and himself recall Launcelot Gobbo's account of the battles between the fiend and conscience. The watchman is a sententious, selfish, impudent clown, full of proverbs, puns and paradoxes, as well as of the muddle-headed theology of the people. "He is out of breath," he explains to Creon, "but not with speed; he has come slowly yet in haste; for he has turned him backwards many times in the road before plucking up courage to face the king; for no one loves the bearer of ill tidings, and so a short journey has become long; however, now he will tell his story, even though there be no story to tell; for after all"—he concludes, laying to his soul the flattering unction with which the unthinking and indolent drown self-reproach and call it piety—"for after all he comes shielded with this hope that naught that is not his fate can happen to him." And so at last he tells his story and is driven from the palace with threats by Creon. He departs with upturned eyes and hands, thanking the gods for his departure and vowing that he will not appear there again. But after a short time he appears again, triumphant, bringing Antigone and announcing that no mortal should abjure anything for the afterthought belies the judgment. He is sorry, he condescends to say, to bring a friend (like Antigone) into trouble, but, as he adds in the same breath with

the undisguised selfishness of one whose life has passed away in sordid cares until none but sordid cares can touch him, all this is of no weight compared with his own safety.

After the watchman's departure and Creon's and Antigone's mutual recriminations, Ismene appears. Though she had refused to help Antigone, yet now seeing her face to face with Creon and his menacings, her sisterly love overcomes all other feelings, and illogical, yet womanly, she declares herself an accomplice in the deed. Antigone is scarcely mollified, and is still scornful at first, but little by little Ismene's simple grief conquers her pride and scorn, and the two sisters are reconciled, and withdraw into the palace.

After the sisters have retired into the palace, Haemon appears, and endeavors in vain to alter his father's determination. His character is shadowy and faintly drawn, and is an impersonal sketch, so to speak, intended to enforce a ruling principle, to embody a ruling passion, rather than to supply materials for a study of character. The principle which he enforces, the passion of which he is the incarnation, is that which is rightly interpreted by the chorus after he has disappeared, the power of love. His whole being, so far as Sophocles reveals him, is centred in his love for Antigone. He is the essential lover, true for all times and types. He is in fact in this drama of Greece what Romeo is in Shakespeare, assuming that Mr. Irving's interpretation of Romeo be correct. It is not Romeo or Haemon whom we hear, not a Greek, nor an Italian, of such and such an era and station, "not him, but a voice," a principle, a passion.

When Haemon has left his father, and the chorus have sung the praise of love, Antigone takes her farewell of

them and life. She is somewhat prolix, and is not altogether undeserving of Creon's sarcasm. Her courage fails her a little, not unnaturally or unbecomingly, as she draws near death. She clutches the altar spasmodically to delay for a few minutes, by religious scruples, the guards who are ordered to arrest her.

Antigone's departure is followed by the appearance of the blind prophet Teiresias, the trusted diviner, who augurs the future by the flight and voice of birds and the condition of the victims. He, like Haemon, is a some-



Haemon entreating his father to spare Antigone. (Taken from the representation of 1882. Mr. McCaul as Haemon).



Teiresias, the Blind Prophet, denouncing Creon.
(From the former representation. Mr.
Gwynne as Teiresias.)

what shadowy figure, but for a different reason. We are so utterly removed in sympathy from the divination of the ancients that we cannot force ourselves to shudder with horror as the chorus of Theban senators must have shuddered when they heard Teiresias' tale of the ill-omened screeching of the birds and the unnatural appearances presented by the victims. But to a Greek or Roman, in critical times at least, all freaks of nature and all unusual phenomena were fraught with dreadful significance.

The five-legged sheep and three-horned oxen, which, with worse mon-

strosities, are exhibited in the dismal slums of great modern cities to gaping children for a penny a head, these sheep and oxen would have made the fortune of any Greek or Roman priest. The fifth leg would have been big to his mind with the fate of empires. The third horn would have solved the mystery of life.

The omens of Teiresias, therefore, so trivial now, were not trivial to the Theban elders; and even to the cynical semi-scepticism of Creon, who is intended obviously to play the same part of the unbeliever which Jocasta plays in the *Oedipus Rex*, they probably seemed worth thinking of. In his second speech, Teiresias dwells no longer on his omens, but, with an impetuous burst of eloquence, which even a disbeliever in omens can appreciate, he denounces the king for his treatment of the dead body. This denunciation falls with appalling force; even the timid and aged chorus leader becomes firm and imperative in his remonstrances with Creon. Even Creon, in spite of his self-will and his semi-disbelief in omens, yields almost without a struggle, and starts off to release Antigone.

It is at this point of the drama that the famous irony of Sophocles, on which so much has been written, is most apparent. The melancholy philosophy which the poet holds tells him that human happiness is oftener marred by want of thought than want of heart, that men's good qualities are often the instruments of their downfall; that their greatest joy is oftenest at the season when sorrow—could they know all—would be most fitting. And so now—when Antigone is hanging herself and Haemon is resolving not to survive her, when Creon is soon to be first childless, and then a widower, now it

is, now, at this most unseasonable hour, that, by the irony of fate, the chorus—all unwitting of what is happening and exulting at Creon's repentance—sing their triumphant hymn of joy to Bacchus and dance round his altar. Fortune pipes to man and in his ignorance he weeps; she brings him cause of misery, and in his ignorance he dances.

When the dance ceases, the messenger, bringing news of Haemon's death, and the queen appear simultaneously before the chorus. To the Greeks this messenger was a very important character; it was played by the first actor, and much value was placed upon a vivid and picturesque setting forth of his story. There is a touch of egotism and self-importance in the part. The messenger, a dependent, who feels himself for once in his life of supreme importance, spins out the tale to some length and dwells with unctiousness on its horrors, without much regard for the queen's feelings. It is probable that the length of his speech is not due simply to stage effect. The Greeks loved eloquence so much that they probably did not feel that the messenger ought to have softened or shortened his story for the queen's ears. To describe him as egotistic, therefore, is to look at him unfairly from a modern point of view. Nor, again, is his moralizing for the same reason intended, like the moralizing of the guard, to savor of rusticity. It is to the Greek taste.

To the long speech of the messenger the queen listens without a word. She is too stunned and dazed with grief to speak, and when he has finished she gropes her way back to the palace door, and is led away by her maids. Her part is obviously one of the most difficult to act and requires imagination and dramatic power as well as unusual command of facial expression.



The Queen hearing from the Messenger of her Son's death. (From the former representation. Mr. Mickle as the Queen).

After the queen's departure the tragedy draws quickly to a close. While the queen is invoking curses on the head of her willful husband, Creon appears with his guards and the body of Haemon. In the midst of his lamentations over his son, a second messenger emerges from the palace to tell him of his wife's death, and in a few moments the palace doors are opened and the queen is discovered stretched by the altar of the inner quadrangle. The curtain drops on the heart-broken king mourning for wife and son and on the chorus singing a cheerless, melancholy song:—
 "Prudence is the better part of happiness,
 A lesson men shall learn when they be old."

In which words, to anticipate for a moment what is said further on of the moral or meaning of the tragedy, lies one of the lessons which the poet is never tired of enforcing.

The story of *Antigone* is, in a large measure, the story of an inherited curse. In one shape or another this is the ground-work of most Greek tragedy. That the sins of the fathers are visited on the children to the third and fourth generations is a truth which fascinated and dominated the imagination of the Greek with an intensity which it has rarely since possessed, except perhaps for students of medicine and physical science. We repeat the words once a week yet never realize, most of us, a tithe of their significance. But just as we can conceive a doctor nowadays brooding with gloomy interest over some mental, moral or physical defect—some hereditary taint, which, sooner or later in youth or in old age, mars in succession the career of each member of each generation of some ill-fated family, so the Greek dramatist, clothing the same hereditary taint with the beliefs common to his age and nation, and transforming it into a special manifestation of divine displeasure, broods over the picture of a Heaven-sent curse passing down along the generations of a doomed family, like the giant roller which the eye can watch crossing from horizon to horizon the waste of ocean. The simile is Sophocles' in the third chorus.

In the story of *Antigone* the instrument by which this hereditary curse works its will or the substance of the curse itself—to look at it from the modern point of view—is a certain rashness and headstrong violence of temper, rather than any serious sin. This makes the tragedy more tragic. It was through this rashness that Laius,



Antigone going to her death. (From the former representation. Mr. Hutton as Antigone).

King of Thebes, the grandfather of *Antigone*, in spite of warning oracles, married *Jocasta*. After this primal impiety his virtues themselves became, as so often in the tragedies of life handles against him. The oracles told him to kill the child which was born to him, but he would not wipe out one offence by another, and the child escaped and lived to become, as the oracles had said, his father's murderer. The same fatal rashness descends to the child so ominously born, and named *Oedipus*. He knows that the



The King haunted by Teiresias' threats. (From the former representation. Mr. Douglas Armour as Creon.)

oracles say he shall slay his father and marry his mother, and therefore he flies from his supposed father and mother. Yet again in his case also his goodness is the handle of his destruction; his very anxiety to preserve himself from guilt is the first step towards the realization of the doom proclaimed. Immediately after leaving his supposed father he meets his real father, and in a random quarrel kills him; with like recklessness, making no inquiry, asking no questions, hurried on by his good intentions and his anxiety to prove the oracle false, he marries Jocasta, a perfect stranger as

he supposes, and yet, had he but waited and inquired, his own mother.

Once more, in the third generation, the same fatal rashness shows itself. Eteocles and Polynices, the two sons of Oedipus, quarrel, and though both know that the curse which slew Laius, and which slew Oedipus shall slay them also, or perhaps because they know it, both throw themselves in the way of opportunities to kill each other, in spite of warnings, and each kills the other. The curse has now fallen on all the male line of Laius' house, but it has not worked itself out; rather, before it is extinguished, it blazes higher than ever and embraces others beyond Laius' direct kin. Creon, the brother of Jocasta and uncle of Antigone, who succeeds to the throne of Thebes after Eteocles' death, succeeds also to a double portion of the spirit of the house. In him as in Oedipus, though to a less degree, there is honesty of intention and sincerity, but all is marred by headstrong vehemence. He is so anxious to maintain the just honor due to patriotism, and the just hatred due to disloyalty, that he refuses to give burial to the corpse of Polynices, who had fallen in battle fighting against his country. To refuse burial to a corpse was an offence in the eyes of them of old time far surpassing what it would be now. To give burial to their dead, Athenian generals, even in historical times, surrendered victory (Nicias); to secure due honor for his remains was the chief care of the Hindoo, Greek and Roman father; to show such honor the chief duty of the Hindoo, Greek and Roman son; just as to-day it is the chief duty of the Chinaman. A Chinaman's filial dutifulness—missionaries tell us—only begins very often after his father's death. The reason is plain: if the body be not so honored with

burial, the spirit—the Greeks believed as the Chinaman believes—wandered homeless on the winds of heaven and haunted the survivors with never flagging vengeance. When, therefore, Creon forbade the burial of Polynices he looked with characteristic recklessness at one side of the case only; with recklessness scarcely less Antigone looked only at the other. The same blending of good intentions with headstrong impetuosity which had ruined her grandfather, father, and brothers, destroyed her. Without trying to dissuade Creon or bear with him, she disobeyed his edict, buried her brother, and gloried in the deed. Her bitter tongue increased Creon's wrath, and his violence in turn only exasperated her, and she called down upon herself at once the sentence of death which otherwise might have been delayed till calmer counsels prevailed. Nor does her haste quicken merely the sentence of death, but death itself. Hardly had she been immured in her living tomb, before Creon relents and sets forth to save her, but already she has hanged herself, and in so doing has destroyed also Creon's son and wife and his own happiness; for her cousin and lover, Haemon—the only surviving son of Creon—in despair at her death kills himself over her, and Eurydice, the queen, who is mourning for her eldest son, killed in battle, gives way altogether, when her youngest also is fallen, and consummates the tragedy by another suicide; and thus the light of both dynasties of Thebes, of the house of Oedipus and the house of Creon is quenched in darkness; and the whole, not on account of some portentous sin, but by means of this natural and venial rashness, combined with the complications arising from an equally natural cause, the love of Haemon for Anti-



The Messenger describing to the Queen her Son's death. (From the former representation. Mr. Mackenzie as the Messenger.)

gone. This it is which constitutes the genuinely tragic element in the story. Had there been no fault in Laius and Oedipus, and Antigone and Creon, their fate would have been too horrible to think of. Had they been guilty of crimes, their fate would have been deserved. It is because they were overthrown by their own faults, and yet these faults were largely faults of manner and skin deep, and were even blended with and in some degree produced by their virtues—by their good intentions and warm hearts—it is from this that the story gains its pathetic and tragic interest.

The moral of the *Antigone*, as has been already said, is the supremacy of prudence among the virtues. This is the theme not merely of the closing song of the chorus (quoted above), but of the meditations of Creon, when he changes his purpose and sets forth to liberate *Antigone* :

" For now the fear comes o'er me that 'tis
best
To round one's life in the accustomed way,"

is the reflection which expresses to the hearers his change of heart and mind. The messenger closes his account of *Antigone's* and *Haemon's* deaths and of *Creon's* despair, in a similar soliloquy :

" He lay in death beside the dead, at last
Holding his bride in the unending Home,
A monument unto mankind that rashness
Is the worst evil of this mortal state."

The burden of *Teiresias's* lamentations is the same :

" How far is Prudence first and best of
things !"

Upon the ears of a Greek audience, ever conscious of the spectre of a jealous Heaven grudging man happiness, and visiting him in the hours of his pride and exultation with retribution and overthrow, such preaching of prudence and moderation fell naturally

and appropriately. Probably the warnings arose not less naturally and sincerely to the lips of the poet preacher. If he did not share his countrymen's gloomy superstitions about the jealousy of the gods, yet prudence and moderation justified themselves to him on other and higher grounds. Life, he thought, was a very complex experience, in the course of which duty often conflicts with duty, and good men are found sincerely opposed to each other ; the fanatic, therefore, who fights for a one-sided truth, for one-half of the truth, for loyalty to the state, *e.g.*, like *Creon*, or loyalty to kith and kin, like *Antigone*, even though his pride and obstinacy do not offend jealous gods, yet sins against intelligence, against fairness, against sweet reasonableness, against the amenities and charities of life. And it is well that he should learn patience and toleration, even by much suffering ; well for the world and doubly well for himself ; for " Whom the gods love they chasten and scourge every son whom they receive," is an apostolic saying which the poet would have welcomed. Suffering, says the Greek proverb, is learning. And thus the tragic fate of *Creon* and of *Antigone*, with other like tragedies, has its compensations, and inspires hope as well as pity.



HE chorus of a Greek drama was the link between the spectators and the actors ; they played the *role* of the impartial bystander, not seldom of the candid friend. Deduct a little exaggerated caution and time-serving, the natural foibles of the old, and there remain fifteen impersonal incarnations of

the universal reason, interpreting the quality of the actors' conduct to the spectators and pointing the moral to be drawn from their calamities.

The position of the chorus in the Greek theatre is a disputed question. Until very recently it was supposed that they were always placed in the orchestra, six feet below the actors, and on a

level with the lowest row of the spectators, and this position, it was supposed, typified their aloofness in spirit from the actors, and illustrated outwardly their function as mediators between actors and audience. Recent excavations have, however, discredited this theory of a lower stage, and have made it seem probable that the chorus frequently, if not universally, occupied the same stage with the actors.

Accordingly, while in the performance of 1882, the Toronto chorus was grouped on lower stages, and only mounted to the main stage for the Bacchic chorus, in the approaching performance chorus and actors will be on the one stage.

A more striking change, however, from the performance of 1882, will be the evolutions of the chorus. In 1882, the chorus remained stationary, except in the Bacchic ode, when they ascended the main stage and moved round the altar in rhythmical measures. This part of their acting was accordingly on that occasion the most impressive and the most popular. At the approaching representation, however, each choric ode will be accompanied with movements and gestures, either representative of the subject of the song, or manifestive of the emotion which the subject suggests. Of course the exact gestures, poses and evolutions of an ancient Greek chorus are lost beyond recall, and it is not pretended that the Athenian chorus in Sophocles' *Antigone*, or in any Greek play, moved in the same figures, or with the same gestures, as the students who will form the *Antigone* chorus in Toronto.

But if there be no exact correctness in the chorus dances, yet an attempt has been made to render them generally correct in style and spirit. Friezes and frescoes and statuary have contri-

buted groups and figures, which have been faithfully imitated wherever the subject of the song made their introduction natural. In particular, some of the groups of three in the love chorus and the Bacchic chorus have their originals in Greek art, and will be recognizable to students of that art.

Mr. H. N. Shaw, the stage manager and trainer of the stage chorus, had studied this subject of the chorus movements with Professor Sargent, of New York, the chief authority on such matters on this continent, and the chief organizer of such choric dances as have accompanied the presentation of Greek plays in America.

At the same time Mr. Shaw has wisely used his own discretion so far as to modify the choric movements wherever, as it appeared to him, he could by such modification picture more clearly and adequately the scenes and emotions called up by the choric song, and thus the movements of our chorus will be in many ways new, even to those spectators, if any such be present, who witnessed the Vassar presentation of *Antigone*, or the *Antigone* of Boston.

The music of Mendelssohn (written for Donner's German translation) was adapted to the Greek by Prof. Ramsay Wright in 1882, for the former representation. Since that time it has been further revised by Professor Wright, and also by Professor Rushton Fairclough, of Leland Stamford University, California. Until 1882, the music had never been set or sung to the Greek, and Professor Wright was the first in a difficult field of work, and one requiring a thorough mastery at once of Greek and of musical theory. Since 1882 independent adaptations have seen the light, in particular, one used at Vassar College last May, and the author of

which is the Vassar Professor of Greek, Miss Leach. As might have been expected the divergencies between this setting and Professor Wright's are numerous.

THE FORMER CAST.

It will be interesting to many to recall the cast of the performance of twelve years ago, and to note what the various gentlemen who took part are doing to-day. The cast of 1882 was as follows:

CHARACTERS.

Creon, King of Thebes (uncle of Antigone and Ismene)—Mr. Douglas Armour, now member of the law firm of Moss, Hoyles & Barwick.

Haemon, son of Creon and lover of Antigone—Mr. C. C. McCaul, now Q.C., and member of the firm of Costigan, McCaul & Bangs, Calgary.

Teiresias, the blind prophet—Mr. W. D. Gwynne, now member of the firm of Crombie, Worrell & Gwynne.

The watchman—Mr. Haddow, now Presbyterian minister at Milton, Ont.

First messenger—Mr. W. P. McKenzie, now Presbyterian chaplain at Dansville, N. Y.

Second messenger—Mr. Fotheringham, now practicing medicine at Toronto and professor at the College of Pharmacy.

Teiresias' guide—Mr. G. Wilgress, now practicing law at Huntsville.

Guards—Mr. McCabe, Mr. Wigle, Mr. Hall, Mr. Bain.

The Queen—Mr. H. Mickle, now member of the law firm of Armour, Mickle & Williams.

Antigone—Mr. Hutton, professor of Greek at University of Toronto.

Ismene—Mr. T. A. Haultain, late of Public Library, Toronto, secretary to Professor Goldwin Smith.

Women servants—Mr. Balderson, Mr. Dickie, Mr. Brown.

THE CHORUS.

The chorus was composed as follows: Chorus leader—Mr. Vines, then dean of University College residence, dead.

First chorus—Mr. C. W. Gordon (1st tenor—quartette), now Presbyterian minister, studying in Edinburgh. Mr. W. H. Blake (2nd tenor—solo—quartette), member of the law firm of Blake, Lash & Cassels. Mr. D. D. Grierson (2nd bass—quartette), practicing law in Toronto. Mr. Rowland (1st bass—quartette), Presbyterian minister in Ontario. Mr. H. Langton (2nd bass), librarian of the University of Toronto. Mr. Hughes (1st tenor), dead. Mr. Vickers (1st bass), practicing law in Toronto.

Second chorus—Mr. H. Wright (1st bass—solo—quartette), Episcopal clergyman near Detroit. Mr. L. J. Clarke (2nd bass—quartette), practising law in Winnipeg. Mr. E. Wright (1st tenor—quartette), practicing medicine in Detroit. Mr. McG. Young (2nd tenor—quartette), practicing law in Toronto. Mr. J. Gibb Wishart (1st tenor), practicing medicine in Toronto; professor at the Woman's Medical College. Mr. Hagarty (2nd bass), classical master Harbord Street Collegiate Institute. Mr. A. B. Cameron (1st tenor), practicing law in Toronto.

Musical conductor—Mr. Torrington.

Stage manager—Dr. Pike, professor of chemistry, University of Toronto.

Prompter—Mr. C. R. Boulton, now practicing law in Toronto.

